

Danger

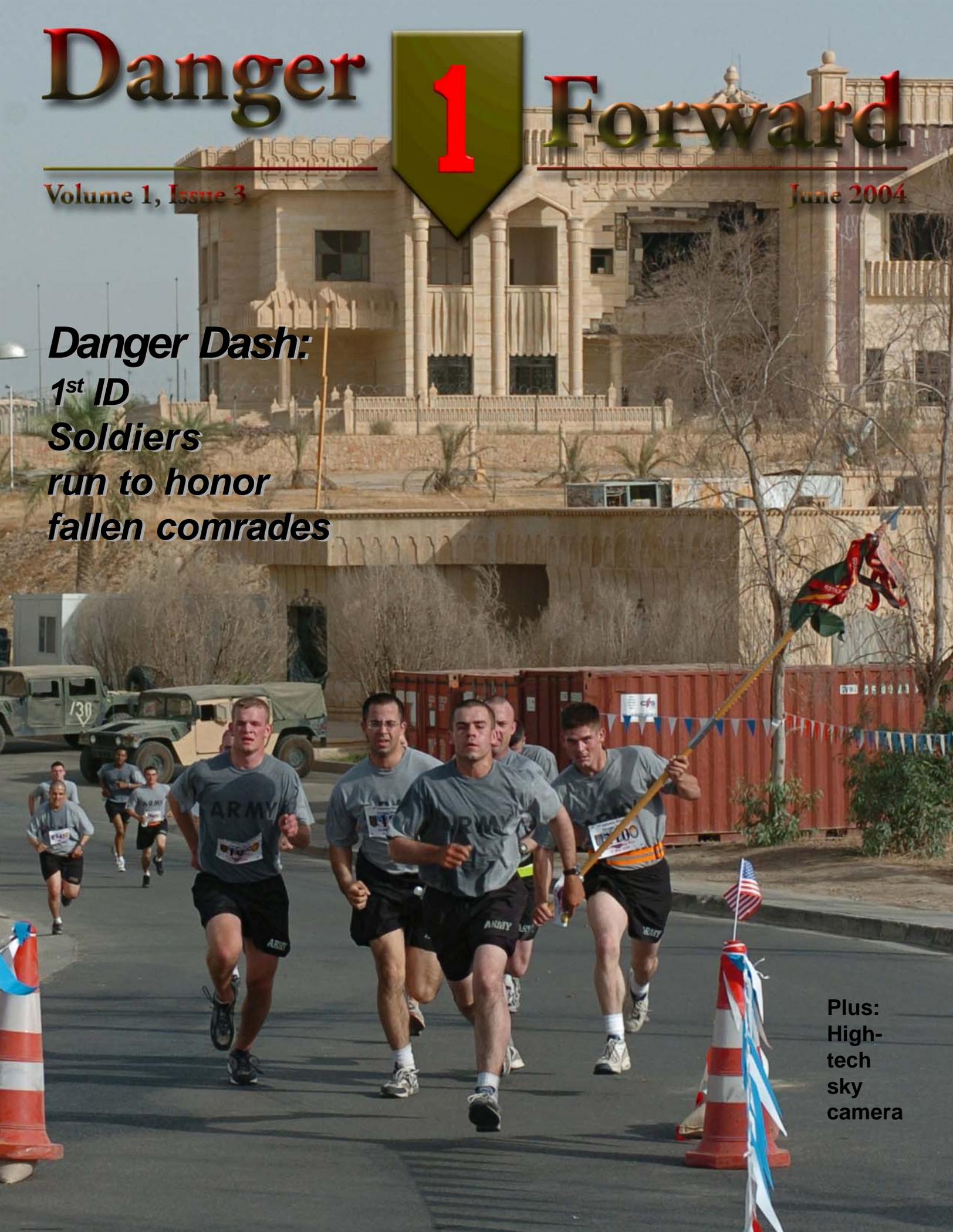


Forward

Volume 1, Issue 3

June 2004

***Danger Dash:
1st ID
Soldiers
run to honor
fallen comrades***



Plus:
High-
tech
sky
camera



ROAD CLEARING

SSG Jessen of the 748th Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit, wearing the EOD-8, MED-ENG System bomb suit, heads towards the site of a possible improvised explosive device in order to place an explosive charge to detonate any dangerous objects. The possible IED was found near Ad Dujayl May 1. The 748th EOD is from Fort Jackson, S.C.

On the cover

CPL Chris Hall, a mechanic with HHC, 1st ID, leads a group of runners to the finish line during the Danger Dash, a 5k Memorial Day race to honor fallen Soldiers.

Photo by
CPT L. Paula Sydenstricker

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PFC Elizabeth Erste

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MESSAGE FROM DANGER SIX

The recent Memorial Day and combat patch ceremonies remind us all of the linkages between the past and the present. What strikes me most is that the Big Red One Soldier of yesterday and today is forged from the same set of American values, purpose and determination.

There is no better warrior in the world. The citations for valorous achievement read the same whether the date was 1944 or 2004. Indeed, the legacy of the 1st Infantry Division is alive and well in every Soldier of Task Force Danger, all 22,000 of us.

We are now well into the middle third of the mission, and I am very pleased with the progress we are making. On any given day, our Soldiers operate across the spectrum of conflict, from a deliberate raid, to setting a complex ambush, to providing timely and accurate counter-fire, to stability and support operations.

At this point, the enemy fears us and works hard to avoid direct contact. The good people of Iraq respect us and understand the urgency of creating a secure environment and supporting the Interim Iraqi Government.

Never have 25 million people been given such an opportunity. The vast majority of Iraqi people are seizing the moment, and want to be part of the solution.

Soldiers, continue the relentless pursuit of the enemy



MG JOHN R. S. BATISTE

with focused intelligence and decisive operations. We will break the cycle of violence. Take pride in being part of a team with uncompromising discipline.

Continue to be grounded in doctrinal troop leading procedures and take care of one another. Leaders, thank you for your leadership. I know I can trust you to do the right thing in the absence of supervision.

Most importantly, take time to thank your families, loved ones and family readiness group leaders and volunteers. The support we are getting from home is fundamental to our readiness and focus on mission.

I have never seen it done better, and offer my profound appreciation to every family member, as well as Task Force Danger rear detachment chains of command and family readiness groups across Germany and almost every state in America to include Hawaii. We are an incredible team making significant contributions to Iraq and the Global War on Terrorism.

We also owe our appreciation to the Society of the First Infantry Division. A special thank you goes to LTG (Ret.) Tom Rhame and Mr. Ed Burke for their continued support to troops in theater and our wounded at Walter Reed. The veterans of our great division are behind us 100 percent.

God bless all of you and continue the mission.

-- Danger 6

MESSAGE FROM DANGER SEVEN

June 6 was an extraordinary day in the history of the 1st Infantry Division. Sixty years ago, members of this celebrated division spearheaded the invasion of Normandy.

They were Soldiers of all ages and walks of life fighting for the same reason you are: "To bring a better life to people who have only known tyranny."

It all started in 1917 when Gen. John Joseph "Black Jack" Pershing formed the 1st American Expeditionary Group from units on the Mexican border and deployed them to France. One year later in July 1918, the unit was designated the 1st Infantry Division.

As we handed out the unit insignia of the Big Red One on June 6, I couldn't help thinking about how this legendary patch came about.

The first story says that during World War I, First Division supply trucks were manufactured in England, so the drivers painted a huge figure - the number 1 — on each truck to distinguish their vehicles from those of the other allies.

Later, First Division Engineers carried this measure a step further by sewing a red patch on their sleeves with the number "1."

The second, more-often quoted tale involves a general and a lieutenant. According to this version, during the build-up and training days of 1917, a general officer decided that the division needed a suitable shoulder sleeve insignia. He proceeded to cut a crude numeral "1" from a ragged suit of his flannel underwear.

When a brash, young lieutenant saw the red numeral, he shouted, "the general's underwear is showing!" The general shouted back, "all right young man, if you're



CSM CORY MCCARTY

so smart, come up with something better."

The lieutenant produced a prototype of today's patch, using a piece of cloth (probably grey) from a captured soldier's uniform on which he placed the red "1".

It doesn't matter which story is true or which one you believe. It does matter that this great division represented by the Red One on the sleeve of its Soldiers' uniforms has secured its place in history, and you are continuing to add chapter after chapter to the Big Red One's legacy.

As the Commander and I attended the Right Shoulder Sleeve Insignia of Former Wartime Service (Combat Patch) ceremonies in June, I couldn't help but feel honored that I was part of the history of this great division. I felt assured looking into the eyes of the Soldiers that we would bring a change to Iraq.

I felt sad that 41 of our great Task Force Danger Soldiers were not there with us. Most of all, I am humbled that I have joined the select few who have earned the right to wear the Big Red One forever.

Every time you look down at your right sleeve, remember the sacrifices we have made, remember the soldiers who won't be coming home with us, and most of all, remember that you are a combat veteran of the Fighting First, The Big Red One.

No Mission Too Difficult!

No Sacrifice Too Great!

Duty First!

--Danger 7--

--Excerpts from the Society of the Big Red One's Web site were used in this column

Opposite page, clockwise from top left: Iraqi Civil Defense Corps members conduct physical training with Coalition Forces on Kirkuk Air Base May 3.

SFC O'Brien of Alpha Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment signals cars to pass at a security check point as SPC Perez (in mirror) watches for suspicious activity near Ad Dujayl April 30.

CSM Doug Pallister, Command Sergeant Major of 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, reaches for an Iraqi Achievement Award as LTC Jeffrey Sinclair, 1-18th INF Battalion Commander, salutes an Iraqi Civil

Defense Corps soldier May 4. Members of the 201st ICDC Battalion were honored for steadfast service in the Tikrit area during recent violence. (Photo by SFC Chuck Joseph)

Soldiers from D Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment keep watch for suspicious activity at an Iraqi Civil Defense Corps complex during a patrol near Ad Dujayl May 1. (Photo by PFC Elizabeth Erste)

SGT Brian Franz, 2nd Battalion, 11th Field Artillery Regiment guides two UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopters to a landing strip at the site of a future Iraqi Civil Defense Corps base in North Central Iraq May 12.



SGT April Johnson



PFC Elizabeth Erste



SGT April Johnson





SPC Ismail Turay JR

Clockwise, from top: Children in Northern Tikrit pose for the camera during a visit from the 324th Psychological Operations Company May 24. The mission included handing out candy, toys and coloring books with a positive message about the Coalition Forces.

SGT Sean M. Douglas, a mechanic from 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, attached to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team's personal security detail, provides security during a sweep of the Mufrek District in Northwest Baqubah May 4.

Soldiers assigned to 2nd Platoon, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, ride in their Armored Combat Earthmovers May 12, while on a mission to deliver supplies to Iraqi Civil Defense Corp soldiers. (Photo by PFC Brandi Marshall)

SPC Jason Frank of HHC, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment waits inside the detainee area during training with Coalition Forces on how to properly establish a traffic control point on May 3 on Kirkuk Airbase. (Photo by SGT April Johnson)



SPC Kimberly Snow





PFC Elizabeth Erste



SGT April Johnson



PFC Elizabeth Erste



SPC Kimberly Snow



Clockwise, from left: PFC Kase, right, of the 748th Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit, assists SSG Jessen with his bomb suit's jacket at the site of a possible Improvised Explosive Device near Ad Dujayl May 1. (Photo by PFC Elizabeth Erste)

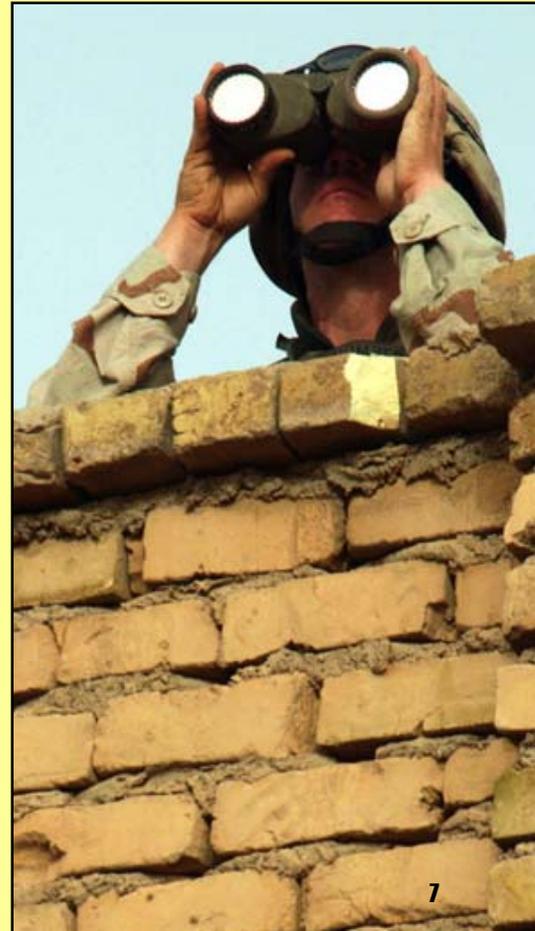
SSG Jessen, 748th Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit checks the underside of two anti-tank mines near Ad Dujayl May 9. The mines were later blown in place.

Two blocks of plastic explosive and two anti-tank mines explode in a village near Ad Dujayl May 9. PFC Kase, 748th Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit set the charge to clear the mines.

A Soldier with B Company, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, holds a bird during a cordon and search April 29 in Sulayaman Bak, Iraq.

Driver, PFC Josh T. Hawkey, Gunner, SPC Zachary Barton and PV2 James E. Threadgill from 1st Battalion, 4th Cavalry Regiment conduct counter-mortar operations in Baqubah April 26.

SGT Humburd, B Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment, watches for suspicious activity from a dwelling being searched during a raid of suspected anti-coalition insurgents near Ad Dujayl April 30. (Photo by PFC Elizabeth Erste)



Running a tight ship at Iraq-Iran border

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC SHERREE CASPER
196TH MPAD

NEAR THE IRANIAN BORDER, Iraq -- Sitting in the driver's seat of a hot and dusty Humvee parked a couple of clicks from the Iranian border, SGT Bob Fiebig scans the mountains in the not-so-distant horizon.

"I'd rather have my tank," Fiebig says matter-of-factly squinting into the hazy sunlight.

However, a Humvee may prove more practical than a tank for this particular mission. Mobility may be swifter in a heavy-wheeled vehicle as its occupants guard the border from insurgents and illegal immigrants.

In support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II, West Virginia Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 150th Armor Regiment has traded in its tanks for Humvees. It's in these vehicles that they perform border patrol, looking for everything from smugglers to illegal immigration.

"Our basic mission is to support the border patrol in intercepting smugglers bringing in weapons, drugs and illegal immigrants from Iran," said 2LT John D. Radnoczi, platoon leader for 3rd Platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor.

"What you lack in protection you make up for in speed and maneuverability," said Radnoczi, who normally commands an M1A1 Abrams.

Fiebig agrees that the Humvee does provide more speed and versatility, but he's a tanker at heart.

Always has been.

"I'll still take my tank," said the Point Lick, Ky. man.

Since beginning the border patrols in mid-March, Fiebig has been on all but three missions.

On a Monday morning in May, members of 3rd Platoon traveled to Lejema Castle in the Diyali Province. Built in the 1920s by the British, the structure is considered a landmark in the war-torn country.

"It's one of the few that survived the Iraq-Iran war," said SSG Ed Johnson, a tanker with the platoon.

Not an easy accomplishment, considering its proximity to the border, which

HESCO barriers reducing injuries during attacks

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC SEAN KIMMONS
2ND BCT, 25TH ID PAO

KIRKUK AIR BASE, Iraq -- Ten days after a rocket explosion injured 11 2nd Brigade Combat Team Soldiers here March 30, another hit near a neighboring container area.

However, the latest blast was far enough away and HESCO barriers were placed around container housing units to prevent shrapnel from injuring more troops.

HESCOs have become a popular form of security fortification for most, if not all, coalition military bases and Iraqi government and security buildings. HESCOs are made of a cloth-like material encased in a metal wire frame.

When filled with dirt or sand, HESCOs become stationary 8 foot by 4 foot shields. Soldiers from the assault and obstacle platoon of B Company, 65th Engineer Battalion are currently using HESCOs to fortify 2nd BCT structures on base.

Using bucket loaders and Small Excavating Equipment trucks, the platoon works 24-hour shifts emplacing and filling HESCOs on the inside and outside perimeters of container housing areas.

SGT Mitchell Bosch, a general construction machine supervisor with the platoon, recently reiterated what he frequently preaches to his Soldiers while working on this long, continuing task.

"If we can save one Soldier's life, limb or eyesight, then our hard work here was well worth it," Bosch said.

Eight of the 11 Soldiers injured in the March 30 rocket attack were from Bravo Company.

"We're doing this for all the units out here," Bosch said. "I could even be the next victim or anyone of my Soldiers."

So far, the assault and obstacle platoon has emplaced about 600 HESCOs in the container areas, but are not even halfway finished. After the HESCO project is completed, they will put 12-foot concrete barriers around the container areas to



Returning from a patrol of the Iranian border, Soldiers from 3rd Platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor are sidetracked by a herder and his flock of sheep.

divides the two countries. After all, Lejema Castle is reportedly only two kilometers from Iran.

"When they see us coming they say, 'Immigration,'" chuckles SGT Rob Cowan, a medic with the platoon.

Yet helping the Iraqi border police round up illegal immigrants is one of the missions that the platoon has been tapped to do, said Cowan of Salem-Roanoke, Va.

"It's just another day at the border," said SSG Howard Branham, who is the acting platoon sergeant.

However, one day is never identical to another.

"We've made quite a few arrests and confiscated quite a few vehicles," said the Delbarton, W.Va., resident.

Branham said the platoon has confiscated Iranian money coming into Iraq as well as "questionable individuals coming from Iran."

And being that close to the border doesn't provide them immunity from insurgent firepower.

Rather the opposite.

One squad on border patrol experienced a mortar attack at dusk. Fortunately no one was injured.

Looking over at the Iranian mountains on the hazy Monday morning, a tanker remembers hearing something that gave him pause.

"I've heard they're asking, 'When are you coming to free us?'" he said.



An engineer from the 65th Engineer Battalion, unloads dirt into a HESCO barrier using a Small Excavating Equipment (SEE) truck inside a container housing area.

reduce visibility from the outside.

While the 65th Engineer Battalion Soldiers protect the walls of container housing units with HESCOs, troops from the 1438th Engineer Detachment of the Michigan National Guard are building wood platform decks to stabilize sand bags on top of every unit. When a platform is finished, the 65th Engineer Battalion lays sand bags on them to guard units against overhead shrapnel.

With the extra armor, Soldiers residing in the container housing units say they feel safer.

"It's a scary thing when you hear a mortar or rocket hit nearby," Bosch said. "Now Soldiers living within the HESCOs and sand bags say they feel more protected at night when they hear the rocket or mortar attacks. The morale is going up because they are feeling safer."

Visit to poor village an eye-opener for American Soldiers

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC SHERREE CASPER
196TH MPAD**

AL-AURLOON, Iraq -- Preparing for a visit to a remote village near the Iranian border, SSG Howard Branham paused for a moment before getting into his up-armored humvee.

"Prepare to have your heart broken," said the acting platoon sergeant for 3rd platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor Regiment.

The West Virginia Army National Guardsman from Delbarton, W.Va., is no stranger to a village in Al-Aurloon near the Iranian border. In fact, the residents there welcome him and his fellow Soldiers with open arms.

"They think I am an Iraqi," Branham said matter-of-factly.

Perhaps this is because over the few months since arriving in Iraq with A Co., 1-150th Armor, Branham has made a concerted effort to learn the language and culture of those who he is trying to help. In return, many in the village appear to appreciate the gesture. The trust and rapport are evident.

As the convoy of humvees roll into the desolate dusty and muddy village, children stop playing and turn their attention to the heavy armored vehicles approaching. As the convoy comes to a stop, the children instinctively make a beeline for the Soldiers as they climb out of the humvees.

Smiles, hugs and the thumbs-up signs greet the Soldiers.

Taking their cue from the villagers' wee ones, the older residents straggled out of their sparsely furnished

mud-caked huts and welcomed the men dressed in desert fatigues. Many are hoping that 2LT John D. Radnoczi has come with some good news.

Living in object poverty, the villagers are in desperate need of running water and other bare necessities. Platoon leader for the 3rd platoon, A Co., 1-150th Armor, Radnoczi hopes a water well can be dug in the near future. Army funding has already been given the greenlight for the project.

Until then, Soldiers from the platoon handed out bottles of clean water, a gesture greatly appreciated by the thirty villagers.

"They drink out of the same water they have to bathe in," said one Soldier with a look of sadness in his eyes.

There is only joy, however, when Branham grabs a bag of candy from the humvee and begins doling it out to a group of children with small outreached hands. Squeals of delight and giggles fill the air.

"This place was decimated during the Iran-Iraq War," said SSG Ed Johnson, a tanker with the unit.

Looking around the village's small perimeter, Johnson notes there are no schools in any of the villages in the southeastern Diyala Province, which the unit patrols.

"I'll show you 10-year-olds that can't count," he said. "Some adults can't tell you what month they were born in."

Watching a 4-year-old boy scurry by, Johnson said with a hint of despair in his voice that an entire generation has gone without the benefit of an education over the past two decades.

"They can't even produce a pen and pencil to write with," he said.

Opening their hearts to the villagers' dilemma, Soldiers from the 1-150th Armor have called back home in an effort to have much-needed school supplies sent over for residents in the villages that they visit.

Phone lines to churches and charity organizations back in the Mountain State have been busy. Although it may take up to a month to receive the care packages, the Soldiers are eager to help out.

Rebuilding a nation is paramount here. Soldiers agree helping Iraqis become self-sufficient is key, and what better way then to educate future generations that will someday oversee the once war-torn country.

Remnants of poverty in the village remind Soldiers that they are assisting a country that has yet to catch up to the 21st Century. A bare rusty single-frame bedspring sits abandoned in the middle of the village. There is no indoor plumbing, nor electricity. A telephone is unheard of.

As Radnoczi, Branham and Johnson enjoy tea and coffee while sit-



ting on a well-worn carpet with a tribal elder in his home, SGT Chris Shamblin rests his back against a wall in the scarcely furnished one-room hut.

"They welcome us in every village," said the tanker from Charleston, W.Va.

Shamblin said the locals in each village are eager to share what little they have with the Soldiers. Outside, many villagers - young and old — mill around looking for handouts from the Soldiers.

As the unit's visit comes to an end, Radnoczi finds some plastic packages of chocolate chip cookies and breaks them open to the delight of the villagers. A small group soon converges and huddles around him. One boy takes an entire package of cookies and two bottles of water.

"Hey, he's set," one Soldier says with a smile.

The boy gives Radnoczi a big grin and the thumbs-up.

Mounted as a gunner atop one of the humvees, SPC Jason Mann gazes around as his vehicle pulls off.

"It's another world over here," Mann said.

"The Bluefield, W.Va. resident said he doesn't ever want to hear about people back home complaining about not having anything.

Branham's words echo in the young Soldier's mind. "They just don't know," he said looking away.

Top: SSG Howard Branham, acting platoon sergeant for 3rd Platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor Regiment made a friend while visiting the village.

Left: During a visit to a village, 2LT John D. Radnoczi hands out bottled water and cookies to thirsty and hungry residents.

'Every Soldier needs to know this stuff'

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC SHERREE CASPER
196TH MPAD

As SGT Scott M. Van Order held tightly onto his legs, SPC Andrew J. Gilmon teetered precariously from the back of a humvee.

With one hand, Gilmon gingerly used a wooden probe to search for explosives through the coarse dirt. He periodically laid a poker chip in the area he was probing - a critical step to outlining an escape route.

The combat engineers were two of 35 soldiers taking part in an Explosive Hazards Awareness Instructor Course program at Forward Operating Base Danger in April. Hosted by the 1st Infantry Division's Engineer Brigade, the three-day course was designed as a train the trainer program for soldiers stationed at various FOBs within Task Force Danger.

It's intended to reduce the number of casualties as a result of explosive hazards, particularly Improvised Explosive Devices, Unexploded Ordnance and mines in the combat zone, officials said.

Members of the Combined Joint Task Force 7 instructed on everything from mine probing and extraction drills to Improvised Explosive Device and Unexploded Ordnance recognition.

"Soldiers tend to pick up stuff and don't know what the hell they are doing," said SFC Rey P. Valiente of the 1st Infantry Division's Engineer Brigade.

The 40-year-old Los Angeles, Calif., resident said soldiers who participated in the program will be able to teach a five-hour block of instruction on explosive hazards awareness to troops in their respective units.

Identifying the hazards of unexploded ordnance, Valiente said, is a priority of the course.

What makes the program unique is the fact that it's taught by multinational instructors, he said.

"If you are going to learn about IEDs, get different views on the subject," he said.

MAJ Craig Madden, of the Royal Australian Engineers, is the program's officer-in-charge. His advice to soldiers is "don't touch."

"We show them the key indicators - what to look out for - and teach them ... so that these students become more aware of their surroundings from an explosive hazards situation," said Madden of Perth, Western Australia.

He was chosen for the position because of his extensive background dealing with IEDs, he said.

The course culminated with practical exercises test-



ing soldiers' knowledge of how to extract themselves from a mine field that involved mine probing drills. They also had to identify UXOs and IEDs in separate lane stations.

Having multinational instructors help in the training was critical because explosive hazards potentially affect everyone in the combat zone regardless of background.

"This is a coalition theatre, and so all forces - not just the U.S. forces - require this training," he said. "It has become a coalition team to train all forces in the explosive hazards awareness."

SSG Chris N. Stowe of the United States Marine Corps' 2nd Explosive Ordnance Disposal out of Camp LeJeune, N.C., is the program's Noncommissioned Officer in Charge.

"The point of this training is to save lives," said the Warren, Ohio resident.

Describing himself as "middle-level management" for EOD in the Marine Corps, Stowe is based at the Mine and Explosive Ordnance Information Coordination Center — MEOICC — at Camp Victory. The MEOICC counts Americans, Australians, South Koreans and Ukrainians among its trainers.

Stowe said explosive hazards awareness training is more imperative than ever.

"The enemy is constantly learning what we do to combat their techniques and they are changing them," he said.

He noted the situation is very fluid.

"It's like carrying a handful of water down the street. You can't stay up-to-date fast enough," Stowe said. "Things change with the change of the wind. The only way we can combat that is by changing our Tactics, Techniques and Procedures - TTP — and getting that out to the units."

On the road more than three weeks out of each month, Madden and Stowe teach several three-day courses across Iraq with the help of MEOICC trainers.

Since the program began nearly nine months ago, the duo have trained some 8,000 coalition forces, included soldiers from Great Britain, Japan, Poland, Spain and Ukraine.

The explosive hazards awareness training has been tasked as one of the highest priorities in theater, Stowe said.

"This course really does save Soldiers' lives," said SSG Joshua J. Marcum, a combat engineer with Charlie Company, 82nd Engineer Battalion, stationed at FOB Gabe east of Baqubah, Iraq.

Marcum said he got lucky and was able to fly to FOB Danger for the three-day class rather than convoy up north. The Morristown, Tenn., resident said he sees at least one explosive a day in "RPG Alley," the route that goes from Eastern Baghdad to Route 5.

SGT Daniel Carter is a scout with Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 63rd Armor based at FOB Scunion, located southeast of Balad, Iraq.

"In this class we learned more things that are relevant to our situation," Carter said. "Every (Soldier) needs to know this stuff."



Left: SFC Richard W. DeMarco, an infantryman with the 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, practices probing for mines at FOB Danger during training.

Top: Soldiers from Task Force Danger attending the explosives training are briefed on how to spot unexploded ordnances in the field.

Right: SGT Scott M. Van Order holds onto SPC Andrew J. Gilmon's legs as the combat engineer practices a mounted vehicle extraction from a simulated mine field.



An M1A1 Abrams tank at the end of the firing line fires a round from its 120mm main gun.



Tanks give troops the edge in combat

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SFC NANCY MCMILLAN
196TH MPAD**

LOGISTICAL SUPPORT AREA ANACONDA, BALAD, Iraq — On today's modern battlefield, armies are constantly looking for an edge to crush the enemy while maintaining order.

With the M1A1 Abram tank as their main weapon, the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 77th Armor Regiment believe they have the most effective weapon to accomplish both missions.

"Our mission is to get resolve with our presence, and our tanks will definitely be noticed," said CPT Michael Kennedy, the battalion adjutant and a Chicago native.

The M1A1 is capable of destroying enemy forces using mobility, firepower and shock effect. The tank is particularly suitable for attacking or defending against large concentrations of heavy armor forces on a highly lethal battlefield.

The Abrams, which arrived at Anaconda in early May aboard the Air Force's C17s, are maintained and operated by a proud group of men comprising Headquarters Company and Alpha, Bravo, and Charlie Companies.

Arriving in country three months ago without their Abrams, the battalion was forced to perform its job in armored humvees.

"We were told we wouldn't need our tanks here ... that was a big disappointment," said SSG Jason Bostic, a Charlie Company armor crewmember from Connecticut.

That decision was made months ago, before the ever escalating violence dictated a need for heavy armor, Kennedy said.

So, are the M1A1s a deterrent against the enemy? SSG James

Gibson, from Forrest Grove, OR, thinks so.

"The tanks have a psychological effect on people," he said. "They (insurgents) tend not to mess with us and stay clear when we roll down the road. Whatever the anti-coalition throws at us, our crews are ready.

"We're here for the long haul, to ensure a peaceful and democratic Iraq."

The 72 tons of steel, with its 120mm main gun, mounted .50 caliber and two 7.62mm machine guns, is definitely an intimidator, and will help the Iraqi Security Services with force protection.

"The tank is so big and scary. I feel confident that it will keep the (bad guys) off the streets and help our people feel safe," said one 20-year old Iraqi Civil Defense Corps member, who wished not to be identified.

That statement seemed to ring true during the battalion's validation exercises. As a vehicle came down the off-limits road next to the range, a few ICDC and tankers tried to get the person to turn around and head back. When the driver didn't, the gunner in one of the tanks spun the turret and pointed it toward the driver, who immediately turned around and took off.

"A tank is designed to kill, and it doesn't care who it kills," said LTC David S. Hubner, 1-77th Battalion Commander. "That's why tank crew training never stops ... it's all about safety."



The loader of the 3rd Platoon leader's wingman tank, B-38, ground guides the tank to the firing line.

TUAV a welcomed addition, saving lives

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SFC NANCY MCMILLAN
196TH MPAD**

The shadow cast upon the ground by the one-eyed, two-winged, fuel and propeller-driven vehicle resembles a plane. And essentially, it is.

The Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (TUAV) is an aircraft designed to support a brigade commander's need for ground maneuver reconnaissance, surveillance, target acquisition and battle damage assessment.

It takes a team of knowledgeable people to run the operation from start to finish. There are communication specialists, computer gurus, pilots flying the aircraft and another controlling the payload.

With a wing span of 12.3 feet, length of 11.2 feet, and a 38-horsepowered rotary engine, the aircraft is projected from the pneumatic launcher into the air approximately 8,000 to 10,000 feet during the day and 6,000 to 8,000 feet at night.

The payload has an electro-optic and infrared camera and communication equipment for command, control and imagery dissemination. The onboard global positioning system instrumentation provides navigation information.

"The vehicle is intended to provide coverage of a brigade area of interest for up to four hours, at speeds of eight to 10 knots, 70 kilometers from the launch and recovery site," said LTC Frank Hall, Commander of the 101st Military Intelligence Battalion.

The TUAV is a combat multiplier that will help the division visualize its area of responsibility. "It will identify Anti-Iraqi Forces as they attempt to disrupt our progress towards a sovereign Iraq," Hall said.

"The UAV is going to do good things here in the theatre," said 2LT Raven Bukowski, platoon OIC with C Company, 101st Military Intelligence Battalion.

It will be a great asset to the Iraqis, providing security for their pipe lines and such. Not to mention, preventing attacks on base camps and convoys, she said. The system is very tactical and mobile.

"With our training, we could pack it up, move it, and set it up in another location at a moment's notice," stated Bukowski.

Bukowski's platoon is the first group to graduate from the U.S. Army UAV School at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, where they first learned individual tasks. The platoon then spent about four months fielding and honing team tasks before being sent overseas.

"We were a new platoon that came together and got along; we trained hard to get here," stated Bukowski.

The UAV pilots go through an arduous process just like regular pilots, Hall said. They have to take a flight physical, log the number of hours flown, practice take off and landings, emergency and recovery proce-



dures, and different readiness levels.

"My Soldiers are very capable, talented people," Bukowski said, "and I trust them to do a good job."

None of this would have been possible without the tremendous support from some great Americans at Fort Huachuca who have broken the mold of traditional Army schoolhouse support by training and deploying this TUAV platoon directly from Fort Huachuca into combat, Hall stated.

"We owe COL Flynn, Commander of the 111th Military Intelligence Brigade, and LTC Costello, Commander of the 306th Military Intelligence Battalion, and the numerous support activities at Fort Huachuca our gratitude for their indefatigable support," Hall said.

"Never have so many anticipated the arrival of so few," Hall said. "We're proud to be able to bring this tremendous capability to the fight."



The Shadow 200 waits in front of the Hydraulic Rail Launch system before being catapulted into flight. After being launched, the air vehicle can gain speeds in excess of 70mph.



SFC Brandon Bayless (middle), UAV operator, and two technicians open the front cover of the Shadow 200 during pre-flight checks.



TACTICAL UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLE



From top left, clockwise: The Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, Shadow 200, awaits it's first Big Red One flight at Forward Operating Base Remagen on May 10.

Inset in frame: A Soldier from the Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Platoon, 101st Military Intelligence Battalion, oils the propeller of the TUAV during pre-flight inspections at FOB Remagen May 10.

Center, inset in frame: SPC Brandon Bayless, seated, UAV Operator, 101st Military Intelligence Battalion, performs pre-flight inspections on the aerial vehicle before the inaugural launch.

Top right: The TUAV sits with it's camera ready for the flight video or infrared photos taken from 6,000 feet in the air. The darkness.

Bottom right: A photo illustration of the Portable Ground Control screen that displays payload data. The PGCS has full functionality for the vehicle. It can operate the payload and receive and display data.

Above: The 1st Infantry Division's TUAV takes flight during the inaugural launch.

Photos by SGT Roland G. Walters



...nt. The Shadow's camera can relay
 ...e system operates in daylight or

Control Station and the viewing
 ...tionality to launch and recover the air
 ...payload data.

...a test run at FOB Remagen May 10.

Scouts assist residents while on patrol

STORY AND PHOTOS
SPC ISMAIL TURAY JR.
196TH MPAD

AD DULUIYAH, Iraq - At first glance, this doesn't appear to be a city that in early April betrayed 1st Infantry Division Soldiers by launching a bloody battle on the troops shortly after fighting erupted in the cities of Al Fallujah and An Najaf.

Instead, nearly everyone was delighted to see the Soldiers of 1st Squadron, 4th U.S. Cavalry Regiment on April 23. The Americans had just dismounted their Bradley Fighting Vehicles in an Ad Duluiyah neighborhood on a bustling Friday afternoon.

The city has a strong Sunni presence, and the people heavily supported Saddam Hussein, also a Sunni, when the former dictator was in power. Ad Duluiyah is located 60 miles north of Baghdad and has a population of about 50,000.

Charlie Section, 3rd Platoon, Alpha Troop's mission that Friday afternoon was to conduct area reconnaissance by foot, gather information for future operations while continuing to build a relationship with the locals.

It appeared to an outsider that the troops had already accomplished the latter part of the day's mission. As they patrolled the city carrying rifles with grenade launchers and M60 machine guns, the people greeted the Soldiers. Some of the residents invited them in their homes for tea or lunch. Others made dinner appointments for the next time the troops return for their daily patrols.

SGT James Lane, 3rd Platoon, Alpha troop, 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, demonstrates to a group of Iraqi children how to use a slingshot.



"This was the norm before the attacks," SSG Paul Sponsel of Illinois said. "You never let down your guard," but there was a mutual trust between the Soldiers and the people, whose tips helped the Americans capture insurgents in the city.

That trust was broken a week after insurgents killed and mutilated the bodies of four American contractors in Al Fallujah on March 31. The gruesome murders were followed by a wave of violence across the country, particularly in An Najaf.

However, the fighting didn't reach Ad Duluiyah until the week of April 8. What was once a peaceful city that befriended the Americans turned violent.

"We were betrayed by the people," SGT James Lane of Illinois said. "It's frustrating because you know they saw something, but they acted like they didn't know. I think they were just afraid to speak up."

The Cavalry squadron struck back hard. Lane vividly remembers the day the violence erupted. It was then that he killed his first insurgent since his unit arrived in Iraq two months earlier.

There was a "bad vibe" shortly after a morning raid of a house in the city, he recalled. Instead of the thumbs up that people normally gave the troops, some residents flashed their middle fingers.

As Lane and his men drove their Bradley fighting vehicles along a wooded area on the way back to base, the Soldiers came under attack. Someone fired RPG rounds and, perhaps, pistols at them, Lane said.

The Soldiers could not figure out where the shots were coming from or who was firing them.

"It was confusing," Lane said. "Some people ran while others stood around. We didn't know who the enemy was."

To avoid killing innocent bystanders, the Americans did not return fire. Instead, they took cover. When the shooting stopped, the platoon found shrapnel and bullet shells in a half constructed building.

As the Americans started to leave the area, Lane's Bradley driver made a right turn onto the main street and noticed two Arab men standing in front of a gas station on the left. The station was about 400 meters away.

Without warning, the men fired two RPG rounds at Lanes' Bradley. The rocket propelled grenades whizzed past the vehicle. Lane immediately returned fire. The round struck one of the insurgents. The other fled.

However, he returned seconds later and attempted to drag the wounded man to safety.



SPC Jesse Varner, a medic with 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment examines an Iraqi man's foot as an interpreter looks on. Varner said he believed the man's foot was in the early stages of gangrene.

But as they drove toward the gas station, the Americans fired another shot at him and the man fled again.

It is common for insurgents to carry away bodies of their dead or wounded counterparts during battle. Leaving the bodies would be embarrassing for their families, Sponsel said.

The wounded insurgent was lying in a pool of blood when Lane and the others arrived at his location.

The wounded man managed to remove a grenade from his pouch and attempted to pull the pin, but he kept going in and out of shock and the Soldiers took it from him. As mandated by law, Sponsel and his men gave the insurgent water and administered first aid.

"He was ice cold. He wouldn't let go," Lane said, adding that the insurgent lived for about a minute after the troops arrived at his location.

As they drove from the scene, Lane felt no remorse about killing his first insurgent. After all, he was in a combat zone, and his job as a Soldier is to defend himself and his brothers in arms.

"I was more pissed off that they attacked us," Lane said. "How dare him. He could have killed us."

A weeklong battle ensued. The 1-4 CAV had no casualties, but a few suffered minor injuries. However, several insurgents were killed.

"They brought it on themselves," Sponsel said. "When the violence stops, we can concentrate on the different mission of rebuilding."

Meanwhile, as they patrolled the city on April 23, several admiring children followed them. Near an alley, Lane stopped and shot one of the children's slingshot as they watched and cheered.

A young boy showed SPC Jesse Varner, the platoon's medic, a rash on his arm. Varner had given the boy medicine for the rash on a previous patrol, and it was beginning to heal.

Varner also examined another young boy's eye, which was infected. However, the medic didn't treat it because he ran out of ointment.

Additionally, he looked at an older man's decaying foot.

"It's in the early stages of gangrene, and there's nothing I can do for him," Varner said shaking his head as the platoon walked away from the man's home.

Later, another old man by the name of Fuazi Muttar Sallom Aljubarri invited the Soldiers into his mud hut for tea. He despised Saddam Hussein because he was an evil man, Aljubarri said. But he particularly hated the former dictator because Aljubarri lost four brothers in the eight year Iraq-Iran war.

"Thank you for save Iraq," he said in a heavy Iraqi accent. "Americans good. Bush good."

Iraqi baby to get life-saving treatment in U.S.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC SHERREE CASPER
196TH MPAD

After U.S. officials on both sides of the Atlantic cut through mounds of red tape, an 8-month-old Iraqi girl traveled to the United States last month to receive treatment for a life-threatening birth defect.

Initially, military doctors thought Fatemah Hassan would need surgery to remove a cavernous hemangioma the size of two softballs from her neck. But when she arrived at Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio, in May, physicians there decided against the operation.

Instead, they opted to treat the ailment with chemotherapy.

Cavernous hemangioma is a birth defect that's caused by the abnormal growth of a blood vessel that affects the right side of the face, neck and upper chest. It enlarges between three and eight months.

Without treatment in the United States, officials feared the baby girl might die from it.

Whether or not Fatemah will later need surgery depends on how she responds to the chemotherapy treatment, Dr. Gayle Gordillo, a pediatric and plastic reconstructive surgeon at Children's Hospital wrote in an e-mail.

"It is possible that she will need some surgery, but the best outcome would be if the tumor resolved without it," Gordillo wrote. "Hard to say exactly how likely she is to need additional interventions besides chemotherapy. I can tell you that 80 percent of children with this lesion respond to the chemo regimen we are using for Fatemah."

Gordillo persuaded the medical facility's board of directors to waive all costs for Fatemah's surgery. The doctor expects the baby to be treated at Children's Hospital for about two months. She and her mother, 21-year-old mother, Baday Amir Abdel-Jabar, will live with a Kurdish family in Columbus while Fatemah is an outpatient.

But before mother and daughter could make their fateful trip stateside, many twists and turns came.

Coming to America

In the early morning hours of May 18, Fatemah Hassan and her mother boarded a military aircraft en route to Germany where they had a brief layover before continuing to Ohio. MAJ Kenneth S. Shedarowich, a physician's assistant with the 1st Infantry Division, accompanied the pair to the United States along with combat medic SPC Mariana K. Beshai, who was a translator and chaperone.

Shortly before 8 p.m. on May 14, LTC Michael Brumage, the 1st Infantry Division's Surgeon, received an e-mail from U.S. Senator Jay Rockefeller's (D-W.Va.) office giving the greenlight for plans to ensure Fatemah receive the desperate medical treatment in Ohio.

It was an eagerly anticipated message and one that many thought came in the nick of time.

"It took a massive coordination from many people to make this all happen in an expeditious manner," Brumage said.

Time is of the essence.

"It often regresses spontaneously," Brumage said of the birth defect, "But occasionally it enlarges."

The latter caused Fatemah's mother and father, Khaleel, to seek help from American Soldiers deployed near their hometown in Mandali not far from the Iranian border. The couple took its only daughter to the front gate of Forward Operating Base Rough Rider. There they pleaded for medical help for their daughter.

LTC Todd Fredricks answered their prayers.

After seeing Fatemah at the Troop Medical Center on Rough Rider, Fredricks worked with the Iraqi Ministry of Defense in Baghdad and the Coalition Provisional Authority to seek medical attention in the United States for the baby. A member of the West Virginia Army National Guard for the past eight years, Fredricks practices emergency and aerospace medicine in Marietta, Ohio. He is the Mountain State's senior flight surgeon.

A Parkersburg, W.Va., resident, the surgeon for the West Virginia Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 150th Armor Regiment, Fredricks has connections with Ohio State University at Children's Hospital in Columbus, Ohio.

Waiting to take flight

"This angel will take flight tonight," said Shedarowich, as he held Fatemah in his arms before her trip.

Inside an ambulance parked on a tarmac, California National Guardsman waited for permission to board a nearby C-141 Air Force plane with Fatemah's small entourage.

"You've made my trip to Iraq all worthwhile," he said looking at the 17 pound baby girl. "I never thought I'd see a pediatric patient over here."

A physician's assistant at Children's Hospital of Orange County in Orange, Ca-

lif., Shedarowich works in the pediatric hematology division there. The Temecula, Calif., resident is attached to Charlie Company, 230th Support Medical Battalion, 30th Brigade Combat Team. He's stationed at FOB Caldwell in Iraq.

"I have great hopes that she will get the care she needs and I am so glad that we were able to work together to get this done," Fredricks said. "This is an example of how we can work with the Iraqis to change the hearts and minds of these people.

"They will see that we are their friends and it will hopefully let them know that we are worthy of their trust and friendship," he said. "I care deeply for Fatemah and her family and she is just one of several children we are working on to get care in the USA."

When he first saw Fatemah, the battalion surgeon knew she needed a skilled pediatric surgeon and his gut told him that wasn't going to be possible in the war-torn country, he said.

"The frank issue here is that care is rationed due to the state of their nation and rebuilding," he said.

By helping children like Fatemah, Fredricks believes the people of Iraq will see the "gentleness behind our great strength" as an Army.

"They will see, I hope, the intrinsic nature of who we are," he said. "A soaring eagle holding the arrows of war with his eyes on the olive branch of peace. That will be a great message, I think. I cannot wait to see how she grows. She is the face of the new Iraq."

Supporting the same goal

A letter penned by 1st ID Commander, MG John R.S. Batiste, carried heavy weight in Washington. He helped to spearhead efforts by writing to Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld's office.

Even the Big Red One's chief of staff, COL Gene C. Kamena, lent help in the time-sensitive matter. He called Catherine Dale, Ph.D., political advisor to Ambassador L. Paul Bremer, administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority, and LTG Ricardo S. Sanchez, commander of the allied forces in Iraq.

"He (Kamena) made a call to her to see that it was fast tracked," Brumage explained. "Everyone was saying that you can't do this in less than two months."

—See *Fatemah Page 24*

MAJ Kenneth S. Shedarowich, a physician assistant at Forward Operating Base Caldwell, holds Fatemah before she boards a flight to Germany.



Band contributing to war in a different way

1st ID musicians boost troops' morale

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SFC CHUCK JOSEPH
196TH MPAD**

The 1st Infantry Division Band does more than march in parades. The ensemble is assigned to the Division Personnel Section (G-1) as a morale asset, but they also can be found pulling guard duty, driving busses and entertaining troops in small groups that run the gamut from jazz to rock and roll.

In addition to belonging to the 1st ID Band, members must participate in at least one of the smaller performing groups that the band offers. Most belong to more than one.

The band boasts two rock groups; Sandbox Twenty plays soft rock and the other, Enter Sandman, a much heavier brand. Sandbox Twenty has played concerts at Forward Operating Bases Anacosta, Speicher, Palowada and, most recently, Danger on May 15.

The Danger concert drew about 100 Soldiers and civilian workers. As the sounds echoed around the base, the crowd grew and, more importantly, they stayed, which was a sign of the skill with which these Soldiers perform.

The band played for about two hours, and the crowd reacted with appreciation for their efforts. Many were tapping their toes and cheering the band on.

SGT Charles M. Vanblarcom, an electrician assigned to the Mayor Cell, enjoyed the band while working at the same time. He was assigned to the concert for logistical support and stayed to take in the sounds.

"It's nice to come out, relax and hear some good music," Vanblarcom said. "It helps break up the year, you know."

The band members said they know that their primary mission is to help boost morale, which is critical in a stressful combat environment.

SGT Rebekah Holmes, French horn player and vocalists for Sandbox Twenty, said she knows her job is to boost morale, and she enjoys entertaining the

troops, no matter what the size of the crowd.

"We don't always get the biggest crowds, but if we make one Soldier smile, it's worth it," Holmes said. "It feels good being here to raise the morale of the Soldiers."

Four of the unit's members pull double duty boosting morale. In addition to their musical responsibilities, two work at FOB Danger's Morale Welfare and Recreation Facility, one drives the MWR bus and the other is the facility's night manager.

Two others work on the Task Force's Fighter Management Pass Program. So, when they're not boosting spirits with music, they make troops happy by helping them get much needed Rest and Relaxation.

Other members play in the band's Jazz Combo, Brass Quintet and Dixieland Band. One of the groups tours Task Force Danger every week, performing on at least two FOBs during each trip.

Concerts are usually played on Saturdays, and the musicians offer their services to the local Chaplains for Sunday services.

A more somber duty for some of the unit is playing at memorial ceremonies. One out of the band's five buglers has played Taps at every task force memorial service.

"It's the worst part of my job, but I wouldn't give it up for anything," said SGT Jarrett T. Ellis, a bugler who also plays in the Jazz Combo, Enter Sandman and the Ceremonial Band. "It's important to give our fallen Soldiers the respect and military honor that they deserve."

Band Master, CW3 Gordon K. Kippola has moved through the enlisted ranks (13 years) to the Warrant Officer Corps to command the band. He is proud of the outstanding job his 38 Soldiers have done thus far, and works behind the scenes to keep them moving. The unit is considered a company and has to fulfill all the requirements of a company level unit.



Above: The band played for about 2 hours in front of a crowd of about 100 Soldiers and civilian workers.

Bottom left: Members of Sandbox Twenty, one of two rock groups from the 1st Infantry Division Band, play on stage in front of one of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's palaces on Forward Operating Base Danger, Iraq May 15.

His Soldiers fill all the administrative slots required of a company. They serve as supply sergeants, administrative sergeants and the like, just as any other unit must do. Additionally, said Kippola, his Soldiers transport, set up and break down the equipment for all their shows. Sometimes they get a little help from the unit they're supporting.

"We don't have roadies," said Kippola.

But when the music starts, all the packing, planning and rehearsing is worth it for these Soldiers, singers and players.

"The busier we are playing music, the happier we are," said Kippola.



WONG-MART

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SPC SHERREE CASPER 196TH MPAD

FORWARD OPERATING BASE ROUGH RIDER, MANDALI, Iraq - It may not be open 24-hours-a-day like its civilian counterpart, but Wong-Mart provides just as much convenience to Soldiers here.

A take off on Wal-Mart, the giant discount retailer, Wong-Mart is the product of several innovative Soldiers on this forward operating base. Essentially, they saw a need and filled it.

"If you stock it they will come," one Soldier said. No doubt.

And stocking the shelves at Wong-Mart is no problem. In fact, Soldiers regularly volunteer to pitch in and unload items in record time from trucks, which arrives about twice a month brimming with everything from potato chips to DVD players.

"It's not a one-person operation, it's a lot of team effort," said SFC Kevin R. Wong, who oversees the improvised post exchange that also bears his name. Wong is a member of the West Virginia Army National Guard based in Beckley, W.Va.

"It's a whole FOB effort," he said. "They work very hard. Soldiers chip in to unload the trucks and get the merchandized stocked."

From sundries to sweets to microwaves and digital cameras, the small PX offers an array of much sought after goods. Inventory is taken twice a week.

Opening on Easter Sunday, Wong-Mart averaged about 40 to 50 customers an hour its first day. Wong said average daily sales ring in between \$5,000 to \$6,000. The busiest day netted more than \$12,000.

Sitting behind the "check-out" counter, SPC James R. Smith makes change for a purchase.

The 36-year-old chaplain's assistant hails from Welch, W.Va. where he is a minister. He likes providing the service to fellow Soldiers and volunteers to man the metal money box, he said. Customers shopping at Wong-Mart have the option of paying with cash, check or credit card.



SFC Kevin R. Wong of Charleston, W.Va., stocks the innovative post exchange at FOB Rough Rider that bears part of his name as "clerk" SPC James R. Smith looks on.

"Welcome to Wong-Mart," Smith pipes up to a Soldier entering the PX.

Sometimes patrons come in the wrong end of the tent, but that's no big problem. Once in there, Smith will give them traffic directions with a smile.

Wong said he also gets regular help in the PX from SPC Chris Whitt and SGT Victor Campos. The later has even offered painted rocks in the PX. Free of charge, of course.

SGT John Bellamy, a cook with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor Regiment, was responsible for making the wooden "Wong-Mart" sign that greets customers at the tent's entrance.

SPC Frank Turley, a tanker with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor, grabs a bottle of Febreze, case of Gatorade, can of Pringles and a pickle before making his way to the checkout counter.

"They've got what we need here," said the Charleston, W. Va. resident.

Looking around during his brief shopping excursion, SPC Joshua S. Bish eyes a case of Sprite. A Princeton, W.Va., resident assigned to Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor, the tanker reached for his wallet.

"It's pretty good, especially the cheese dip," Bish said of the selection of merchandise.

About twice a month, a truck convoys several hours to Baghdad International Airport where items are purchased from AAFES. In turn, the goods are sold for the same price to Soldiers back at FOB Rough Rider. No profit is made.

"The money we bring in is the amount we spend on the next trip," Wong said.

Wong, an assistant operations sergeant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor, said \$30,000 in impress funds through AAFES started the ball rolling for the small FOB's PX.

A stocking clerk for the supermarket chain Kroger, Wong marks his 29th year with the company in October. He said he often has the same headaches with those that stock the PX here as those back home.

"It's just as hectic trying to get the guys to stock like items alike," he said.

Before Wong-Mart opened Soldiers didn't have access to any type of "Pogey bait" while at FOB Rough Rider. CPT Donald Rakes suggested to the armor battalion's executive officer, MAJ Roy Bourne that a PX be created for Soldiers at one of the most remote FOBs in Task Force Danger.

The rest, as they say, is history.

Wong tries to keep patrons happy by making sure the eight shelves, cooler, freezer and a large wooden pallet in the center of the tent are chock-full of "essentials," from Gatorade to Snicker bars.

And if Soldiers don't find something they want, they can always put in special requests.

"Whatever shows up most frequently we try and get," Wong said. "We can't please everyone but we do the best we can with what they (AAFES) have available," Wong said. "If they've got it, we'll have it here."



Running for fallen comrades

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
CPT L. PAULA SYDENSTRICKER
196TH MPAD

On a sweltering Memorial Day morning in May, a throng of 1st Infantry Division Soldiers participated in a 5K run to honor comrades who made the ultimate sacrifice in Operation Iraqi Freedom and previous wars.

More than 510 active duty, National Guard and Reserve troops of all ages took part in the race, which started in front of the Morale, Welfare and Recreation palace.

"Today, I would like for all of you out here to run, run for the Soldiers who are not with us today," MG John R. S. Batiste said prior to the race.

The 3.1-mile event required participants to run in a loop around a man made lake in the middle of this FOB. The division staff thought of the idea for the race shortly after arriving in Tikrit in February. Officials



Runners for the 5k Danger Dash take off from the starting line just after singing the Big Red One song.

determined the FOB would be an ideal location for the run.

Using an engineer wheel, CPT Nathan Springer, the officer in charge of the event, measured the course three times to ensure that the distance was correct.

"We wanted to do an event that the Soldiers could step back from their mission, reflect on what we have completed and focus on the mission for the next eight months," he said, adding that Soldiers came together as a team to make the event a success.

One of the participants, SSG Vincent Rhatigan of the New Hampshire Army National Guard whose unit is attached to the Big Red One, practiced on the course three times to ensure that he could complete the race.

"I did this course to compete and to push myself," Rhatigan said. He also wanted to participate as a national guard Soldier to see if he could compete with the active component, he said.

The official winning time was 17 minutes, 11 seconds, which SPC Josh Horner from the 1st ID's Headquarters, Headquarters Company claimed. Second place went to CPT Michael Baka with a time of 17:56 and CPT Mathew Feehay placed third with a time of 18:10.

Baka is from Headquarters, Headquarters Division Tactical Command Post and Feehay is the 4th Brigade's liaison officer.

"I try to run everyday, but a race is a little different, you push yourself harder," Horner said.

He normally runs anywhere from five to seven miles a day, he said.

Horner also competed in track in college in his hometown in Pennsylvania. His normal run was the 5K and the steeple chase in college.

"I wanted to build the morale of the younger Soldiers," said SGT Don McDonald of HHC 1st ID.



More than 510 runners ran in the 5k Danger Dash held Memorial Day at Forward Operating Base Danger.

While McDonald ran to build morale up, 2LT Christopher Fiorentino, Alpha Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Air Defense Artillery ran to develop as an officer. This is a tradition that all new lieutenants perform in the unit.

"This is my opportunity to bear the string for my unit," Fiorentino said.

Although all had a different reason for running the race, they all came together to honor the Soldiers that were not there to perform the race with them.

"We wanted to do an event that was fun and where the Soldiers could break away and honor those who sacrificed in their own special way," Springer said.

Weapons competition brings out fastest draw

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT W. WAYNE MARLOW
1ST ID PAO

May 18 marked the first time in about two months that SPC Brian Huddleston had completely taken apart and reassembled his M16.

But that would have been hard to tell from his performance at a weapons assembly contest in the Morale Welfare and Recreation theatre on Forward Operating Base Danger.

Huddleston finished first in the M16 category, with a time of one minute, 45 seconds. Other winners in the contest, sponsored by MWR and Kellogg Brown and Root, were PFC Christopher Dodd in the M249 (1:17) and SPC Robert Hoffman in the M9 (0:32).

"I was a little nervous," said Huddleston, a carpenter with C Co., 216th Engineer Battalion. "It's been a while."

But Huddleston displayed few jitters, deftly disassembling the rifle, then putting it back together just as quickly. "Cleaning it every day helps," he said. "Just know the pieces of your weapon."

Hoffman came primarily for the M249 competition, but left with the glass trophy for first place in the M9.

"I hold the record in my company for the SAW, so it was like, 'you're gonna do it, right,'" said Hoffman, a turret gunner with 2nd Battalion, 19th Military Police Company. "I'm a 240 gunner. I haven't played with the SAW in a while."

Regardless of weapon, the most important factor

remains practice.

"The key is repetition. You've got to keep doing it and doing it the same way every time," Hoffman said. "You want to find the sequence that works best for you."

It was a matter of finding two sequences that work for Dodd, the only Soldier to place in two categories. Besides his victory in the M249, Dodd took second in the M9, with a time of 1:03.

"I felt pretty good coming in. I had all the guys here rooting for me," Dodd said. "And I couldn't ask for better competition."

As to how he became proficient with weapons so different in size, Dodd said, "Just keep practicing and working with it."

SPC Gabriel Harvey echoed that belief. Harvey, a carpenter with C Co., 216th Engineer BN entered the M249 contest.

"Usually when I practice, I go for sequence first," he said. "Then on the third or fourth run, I go for speed. You've got to make sure your weapon is well-maintained. The cleaner it is, the easier it's going to be. And keep calm. If you're excited, you're gonna make mistakes."

Harvey normally carries an M16, but he gladly signed up for the M249 contest.

"It's something fun to do," he said. "I just happen to like the SAW and play with it every chance I get."



SPC Gabriel Harvey, a carpenter with C Company, 216th Engineer Battalion, pulls the charging handle during a weapons assembly contest on May 18.

Coalition gives province \$40 million for improvements

STORY AND PHOTO BY
CPT L. PAULA SYDENSTRICKER
196TH MPAD

As part of their continuing effort to rebuild Iraq, the 1st Infantry Division along with the Project Manager Officer and the Coalition Provisional Authority gave a combined \$40 million to the Salah Ad Din Province during a council meeting in April.

The money will be used to establish public works program in each the province's townships, officials said at the April 29 meeting, which was held at the Tikrit government building. CPA, PMO, military as well as local government officials were in attendance.

With the support of the three organizations, the money will allow the townships to get immediate results, said Buddy Allgood, security and justice officer for the PMO.

Each township received amounts that range between \$500,000 and \$1 million, depending on its population, officials said. The public works projects were designed and consolidated solely by Iraqi engineers.

Engineers from each township compiled a list of projects that needed improvement. The lists were then prioritized by availability of supplies.

Finally, Fallah Hassan Al Naqeeb, governor of Salah Ad Din, approved the projects. He praised the Americans and said their contributions will benefit the Iraqi people in the long run.

"Thanks to all that helped in this process," Al Naqeeb said. "This will show great understanding and will be a great example to the Middle East, especially the Arabic world."

Ali Ghalib Ibrahim, chairman of the provincial council, also lauded the Americans for their financial contributions.

"(Americans) prove they are here for liberation and to teach us the democratic style," he said.

Contracts for the majority of the projects will go to Iraqi companies, said LTC



COL Randal Dragon, commander of the 2nd BCT, discusses with Fallah Hassen Al Naqeeb, governor of the Salah Ad Din Province, the process that the township must go through to establish a public works program.

Courtney W. Paul, executive officer of the 1st Infantry Division's 264th Engineer Group. Hiring Iraqi contractors will allow the people to repair their own infrastructure and make repairs to electric, street lights, water and the like, he said, adding that it also pumps money into the economy.

The next step for projects is to show progress. The head Iraqi engineer, Bhaled Hassan Mahdi, said the townships need to focus on the projects for their township and to make sure the infrastructure improves.

"I only feel happiness now, and this will force liberation," Ibrahim said.

U.S. Army continues releasing prisoners from Abu Ghraib

STORY BY
SGT W. WAYNE MARLOW
AND SGT KENT TAYLOR

Military police officers from the 1st Infantry Division have been handed a central role in the release of prisoners from Abu Ghraib. They are providing security for the convoy of busses from the prison to three

cities within the 1st ID's area of operations.

The first mission in the ongoing cycle came on May 13-14. Members of the 1st Military Police Company, 1st ID, provided security for a planned convoy of ex-prisoners from Abu Ghraib to Tikrit, Kirkuk and Baqubah. The second release came May 21, with prisoners being released in the same cities.

While it is a happy time, there's always a chance of emotions boiling over. That's where a calm, professional demeanor comes into play.

"That situation was potentially volatile," said CPT Tommy G. Kerr, Commander of the 1st MP Co. "It was a situation I was capable of controlling with the abilities I had on the ground, to an extent. It could have turned into a much worse situation than it was. It was a challenge to maintain security."

But maintain it they did, part of an overall success, Kerr said.

"I would attribute the success of the mission...to the recon we conducted one and two days prior," he said. "That set the conditions for a successful mission. I feel like we had done the mission analysis, we pushed out the warning order, had done the planning, map recon, and recons of the sites."

"We established communication with the brigades as far as the sectors we would be traveling through," he said. "So we were well prepared for the mission, and we continued to communicate with everyone."

There were several factors to consider throughout the mission.

"There are a lot of different challenges," Kerr said. "You are dealing with a populace you can't speak with. We rely on hand and arm signals. In addition to that, you have to deal with enemy snipers...and RPGs."

While the mission went well, it's only the first step, Kerr noted. "The mission to release Iraqi citizens from



Ahmad Khartoum greets his father, Abdul, following the elder's release from Abu Ghraib prison.

Abu Ghraib is going to be an ongoing mission," he said. "Several detainees are going to be released. It is a mission we will continue to support. It is a very important mission for us."

And he also keeps sight of the larger picture: "I know that eventually, we will leave Iraq a better place."



SGT W. Wayne marlow

Khalid Al-amoud celebrates his new-found freedom after being released from Abu Ghraib prison and bussed to Tikrit on May 21.

Coalition forces improve local clinic

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC SEAN KIMMONS
2ND BCT, 25TH ID PAO

DIBBIS, Iraq - Once housed in a shabby building with faulty equipment, the medical clinic in this predominately Kurdish town was recently transformed to a modern facility by 2nd Battalion, 11 Field Artillery Regiment Soldiers.

The project was headed by 1LT Edward "Tripp" Baldwin, Task Force 2-11 FA physician assistant. He used money from the Commander's Emergency Relief Program to make improvements to the clinic that serves some 25,000 people.

The cost of renovating the 15-room clinic and purchasing equipment was about \$57,000. Baldwin and his crew completed the project within a month.

"This clinic is probably better than most ... clinics in Iraq now with the equipment they have," Baldwin said.

New equipment included an ultrasound machine, an auto-clave used to sterilize instruments, an electro-cardiogram used to get a picture of the heart, nebulizers that are used to treat asthma and bronchitis, portable oxygen bottles and an incubator.

"I got my interpreter who is a trained doctor's assistant to find me a medical supply contractor that could supply these things to me," Baldwin said. "It was an outgoing battle to find the right things because medical equipment is hard to come by in Iraq."

The task force also purchased a SUV for the clinic and repaired its two ambulances, pickup truck and generator, Baldwin said.

A major upgrade to the clinic was the addition of a five-line Internet satellite, he said. Previously, doctors couldn't coordinate with the Ministry of Health in Baghdad or Kirkuk because phone lines did not work properly. Communication was only possible by traveling to those cities. Now, clinic officials can communicate via e-mail and do research online.

Nassar Saadey, the clinic's computer programmer who is in charge of maintain-



Cheman Asad, a nurse for the Dibbis clinic, researches on the newly installed five-computer internet system. The internet capability will help bridge the communication gap between the clinic and the Kirkuk and Baghdad Ministries of Health.

ing the clinic's Internet was visibly excited.

"For years, I dreamed to see the Internet in my small city, now the U.S. Army has made my dream come true," he said.

TF 2-11 officials plan to spend an additional \$20,000 of CERP funds to renovate the Altun Kapri clinic, located just northeast of Dibbis. The money will be spent on the same type of medical equipment that the Dibbis clinic received.

Commission helps Iraqis reclaim land taken by Saddam

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT W. WAYNE MARLOW
1ST ID PAO

The term "Saddam Hussein's justice system" was usually oxymoronic. Rather than a way of helping Iraqis when wronged, the system enabled a dictator to deprive his citizens of liberty and property.

The Iraqi Property Claims Commission opened on May 25 and will work to right some of Saddam's wrongs. Fittingly, the location in downtown Tikrit served as a ministry of justice building under Saddam. It will also be conveniently located for Salah Adin Prov-

ince residents, as the office of land registration sits nearby.

Sometimes Hussein took land through brute force, while at other times he used threats and legal gymnastics to pilfer. Either way, ordinary, hard-working Iraqis had their land taken, and now they can get it back.

During a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the commission building, 2nd Brigade Combat Team Commander, COL Randall Dragon, said the day represented the dawn of a new justice in Iraq. Joining Dragon were several Iraqi dignitaries.

CPT Dan Stigall explained how the system will work. Stigall serves as the 1st Infantry Division's legal liaison to the Coalition Provisional Authority.

"Iraqis will come to IPCC with documents of what they had, what land they owned," Stigall said. "If they don't have enough evidence, we help them get that evidence. Often times the land was just taken by Saddam Hussein. Sometimes, they were forced into a contract where they were given a petty sum... for the land."

Those who had their land seized under the Ba'athist regime, up to April 9, 2003, are eligible for compensation.

In some cases, the same land will be returned. In other instances, a similar piece of land or cash will be given.

For instance, Stigall said, if seized land now houses a town hall that would be impractical to tear down, the landowner would probably receive another form of compensation.

The commission will deal with claims of property seized by Saddam, but not property destroyed in war. Those claims are handled by the regular Army claims process, Stigall said.

Besides providing a measure of justice, the commission will be an initial step in greater Iraqi autonomy.

"This is going to be an Iraqi center run by Iraqis," Stigall said. "It's a good example of what's going to happen in the rest of the country. We helped get it started, but after today it will be run by Iraqis for Iraqis."

"There will be very little coalition involvement," he said. "We will offer assistance, but it will be a very behind-the-scenes role."

Saddam gobbled up so much property during his quarter-century land grab that estimates of how many Iraqis are due compensation invariably fall short.

"Every time we try to come up with an estimate, we find out there were more than we thought," Stigall said.

Sunnis and Kurds were impacted especially hard, but the favored Shiites felt the pinch, too.

Besides the legal benefits, Stigall thinks the commission will yield cultural dividends as well.

"When Saddam Hussein took people's land and displaced them, it created ethnic tension in society," he said. "Rather than... take a gun and have the victim turn into a criminal, this gives them a legal way to get back what was taken, and given them a degree of healing."

"They deserve some measure of justice and this provides that. It helps people know when they were wronged, it didn't go unnoticed."



CPT Dan Stigall, 1st ID legal liaison to the Coalition Provisional Authority, visits with Iraqi officials at the opening of the Iraqi Property Claims Commission office.

ICDC regional training center opens on FOB Danger

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SFC CHUCK JOSEPH
196TH MPAD**

A 10-day leadership course for Iraqi Civil Defense Corps soldiers in the 1st Infantry Division's area of responsibility started May 29 at a new regional training center on Forward Operating Base Danger.

The Primary Leadership Develop-

ment Course and basic training were already being held at various locations throughout the region. However, American officials thought it would be best to hold them all at the regional training center, dubbed 'ICDC Island.'

Basic training, which was to start at the end of June, will also be held on the island, officials said.

Troops going through PLDC are junior enlisted ICDC soldiers who were se-

lected for their leadership abilities. The class was modeled after the United States Army's PLDC, a promotion prerequisite for junior-enlisted Soldiers advancing into the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps.

Approximately 250 soldiers were selected for the first class.

The Iraqi students come from many ethnic backgrounds, and train side-by-side in an effort to unify the ICDC, said SFC Ronald Hoover, drill sergeant from Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 79th Field Artillery Regiment.

The coursework consists of physical training, leadership classes, basic soldiering skills and drill and ceremony.

Like the American version of PLDC, the course's philosophy is to provide a "train the trainer" environment, said MAJ Scot R. Bemis, Training Center Commandant.

"Our overall goal is to give the ICDC the leadership skills and confidence to be able to secure their own infrastructure, economy, people and borders," he said.

The course is currently taught by United States Army drill sergeants. However, Big Red One Soldiers along with ICDC soldiers will later take over, offi-



An ICDC platoon stands in formation May 29 before marching to the dining facility.



An Iraqi Civil Defense Corps platoon from the first class to attend Primary Leadership Development Course marches to the parade ground to hear a message from the commandant before the class begins.

cially said. Eventually, the course will be taught solely by ICDC soldiers.

Every member of the center's staff has an ICDC shadow. From supply sergeants to classroom instructors, ICDC members will learn from their American counterparts in preparation of the takeover.

Michigan civil affairs Soldiers improving Iraqis' livelihood

**STORY AND PHOTO BY
SFC NANCY MCMILLAN
196TH MPAD**

The 415th Civil Affairs Battalion, out of Kalamazoo, MI., is focused on one mission: winning the hearts and minds of the people.

With the help of translators, the 415th acts as a liaison between the government and Iraqi people.

"Our job encompasses projects, claims, dealing with the detainees and their families, and just about anything which helps stabilize the government," said SGT Corinne Sommer.

Some of the project undertakings include the rebuilding of schools, distributing educational supplies, providing computers for the local university, running electricity to deprived areas and renovating water treatment plants.

Funding for the goodwill projects come to Multi-National Force-Iraq from Congress.

MNF-I, formerly Coalition Joint Task Force 7, is comprised of several nations.

Brigade commanders and other leadership, with the guidance of Coalition Provisional Authority, make a list of desirable projects, prioritize them and then forward the assignments to civil affairs.

"Once we know the objective, we send teams out to access the site or situation," Sommer said.

The teams subsequently make recommendations, proposals and then bids for a contract.

"We don't stop there, though, we see the project through each phase," Sommer said. "We stay with it from start to finish."

Projects are only part of the civil affairs mission. The battalion is also involved in the distribution of funds

for claims turned in by the Iraqis, said SSG Matt Domsic.

Civil affairs was responsible for giving laminated religious engagement cards worth \$50 for pilgrimage to Mecca and Saudi Arabia for Haji, an honored occasion usually not afforded by the poor.

Once approved, civil affairs awards business grants to individuals, via money confiscated from the regime of former dictator Saddam Hussein, along with other

sources. Funds are also given to tribal sheiks for care of their poor and to rebuild aging or destroyed mosques.

"Part of the effort to restore Iraq includes reimbursement for accidental death of livestock and damage or destruction of homes, vehicles and other property caused by military actions," said Sommer.

It only makes sense to do these things, Hunkins said.

"We have to stay in good with the Iraqis if we want to accomplish our mission," he said.



1st ID hosts security forces conference

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC SHERREE CASPER
196TH MPAD

The 1st Infantry Division sponsored an Iraqi Security Forces Conference here April 27. From the hiring of Iraqis to police themselves to the equipment needed to fulfill that mission, a wide-range of topics were discussed at the six-hour conference attended by American and British forces.

Brigade and battalion commanders from the 1st ID in charge of Iraqi police services, Iraqi Civil Defense Corp, representatives from border enforcement and Coalition Joint Task Force 7 - which has since been renamed to Multi-national Force-Iraq — counterparts attended the conference to discuss critical issues such as the manning and infrastructure for the Iraqi Security Forces.

During a press conference April 28, MG John R.S. Batiste said the Big Red One would “continue to work jointly with Iraqi Security Forces to achieve a safe and secure environment for all Iraqi citizens.”

“We are committed to improving Iraqi security by assisting, training and equipping the Iraqi Security Forces,” Batiste said. “We have established a professional training program and facilities within which to train ICDC leadership and soldiers.”

Batiste told the media that Task Force Danger currently has 40 international police advisors to help advise, train and mentor Iraqi police officers in police operations.

“The Iraqi security and coalition forces are the only legitimate armed forces in Iraq,” he said. “Together we will ensure a safe and secure environment for all Iraqis.”

The security conference was the division’s first in Iraq. Similar ones are usually held in Baghdad every four to six weeks.

But LTC LaTonya Lynn, Provost Marshal for the 1st ID, said training security forces to police their own is not a new mission for the Big Red One. In Kosovo, the division trained peacekeepers.

“We have done this particular role before,” Lynn noted. “Just not in Iraq.”

Lynn said challenges to implementing a solid Iraqi Security Force included cultural differences and “getting the proper equipment to the proper people at the



Personnel that attended the April 27th security conference line up for a picture in front of the “MWR Palace.”

proper time.”

“Timing is everything,” she said.

Many pieces of equipment must come through other countries.

“That makes it more of a challenge because of the force protection issues and security measures that have to be taken to ensure that we are safeguarding not only the equipment, but also the individuals who are actively participating in those escorts,” Lynn said.

The 1st ID’s Provost Marshal said Iraqi’s are receiving police training in the Task Force Danger areas of operation as well as Baghdad and Jordan.

“Force protection is paramount,” she said.

While many Iraqis view the coalition forces as “outsiders,” Lynn said the military was here to try and assist them in becoming self-reliant in policing themselves.

“We are introducing Democracy into a culture where there was no Democracy,” she said.

Gaining approval for baby’s trip a quagmire of mammoth proportion

--Fatimah from Page 17

Not to be deterred, Brumage himself made calls to Sen. Jay Rockefeller (D-W.Va.). Simultaneously, Fredricks made calls to the office of U.S. Congressman Ted Strickland’s (D-Ohio).

As the baby’s plight worsened, American forces behind the scenes worked diligently to cut through the massive red tape that would enable her to undergo surgery in Ohio. Fredricks worked with Rockefeller’s and Strickland’s offices as well as with their respective aids, Wes Holden and Stacey Bodmer.

“We had a U.S. senator and U.S. congressman working for that common goal,” Brumage said. “They divided the labor.”

Rockefeller’s office also worked with its counterparts in the Secretary of Defense’s office. Bodmer was in contact with the Immigration and Naturalization Service as well as the U.S. State Department to seek a humanitarian parole, which would grant visas for Fatimah and her mother to fly to America.

In the meantime, Brumage worked with the foreign office in Berlin, Germany as well as German embassies in Amman, Jordan and Baghdad to ensure mother and child had proper clearance to transit through Germany.

“The ultimate authority in Iraq to release her to go to the United States was the Ministry of Health,” Brumage noted. “In order to get the Ministry of Health to agree to this, the family had to go to the director general of the Ministry of Health in the Diyala Province with a statement that medical services were not available.

The letter with a medical summary by Fredricks



SPC Mariana K. Beshai, a combat medic with the 31st Combat Support Hospital, plays with 8-month-old Fatemah Hassan as the child’s mother, Baday Amir Abdel-Jabar, looks on.

was then sent to CDR David Tarantino, the U.S. Naval doctor who is the CPA health advisor in Baghdad. In turn, Tarantino submitted the paperwork to the Ministry of Health.

Red tape paper drill

It was a quagmire of mammoth proportion. But one U.S. military forces and officials were desperate to tackle.

Army COL James E. Bruckart, the Combined Joint Task Force 7 surgeon and U.S. Air Force LTC Craig Gorley, MNC-I’s medical regulating officer in Baghdad, as well as the Joint Patient Movement Requirements Center in Doha, Qatar played roles in the drama by helping to process Fatemah into the medical evacuation system.

“Everything at this point has fallen into place,” Brumage said. “It took a massive coordination of many

people to make this all happen.”

At one point, the 1st ID’s Surgeon contacted Gen. Robert H. “Doc” Foglesong, commander of the U.S. Air Force in Europe, in an effort to facilitate transportation back to the U.S.

“It turns out that he is a West Virginian, too,” Brumage said.

From Williamson, W.Va., the two men also share another common bond. They are both West Virginia University alumni.

Even Brumage’s 66-year-old father, Ron, played a role in the massive undertaking to get Fatemah treated. The elder Brumage was a liaison to Holden’s office in Charleston by faxing Rockefeller’s aide an e-mail sent to him by his Soldier son in Iraq.

By even a stranger coincidence, Ron Brumage mentioned to a new neighbor about the endeavor that was being undertaken on Fatemah’s behalf, and he is amazingly enough a friend of Fredricks.

And by happenstance, Congressman Strickland’s aide, Stacey Bodmer, discovered that her aunt attended Brumage’s wedding in Croatia in 1994.

“It turns out they are close family friends,” Brumage said. “It’s just one of those small world stories. Two small world stories embedded in a larger one.”

Adding: “It’s a strange coincidence and it really makes you wonder if it is a coincidence at all.”

As for Fatemah, she was responding well to high-dose steroid treatment, and the cavernous hemangioma had regressed, Brumage said June 4. The child was to continue outpatient therapy until June 14.

Doctors will evaluate her progress and decide on other forms of treatment, Brumage said.

TF 1-21 INF honors fallen Soldier

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC SEAN KIMMONS
2ND BCT, 25TH ID PAO**

KIRKUK AIR BASE, Iraq - Known as a quiet professional who led by example but was a clown at heart, SSG Todd E. Nunes was honored during a memorial ceremony here on May 7.

Five days prior to the ceremony, Nunes and his squad from Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment were conducting a mounted patrol in Kirkuk. It was then that their convoy was attacked by an improvised explosive device and small arms fire. The direct enemy contact killed Nunes and wounded 10 others.

"Our task at hand is to remember, commemorate and honor the sacrificial life and service of one of our own," Chaplain (CPT) Everett Franklin said during the ceremony.

Both Soldiers and Airmen cramped into a stuffy tent



to attend Nunes' ceremony. Some of them mourned more than others with tears filling in their eyes and their heads bent over. But one thing was for certain, they all came to pay tribute and hear of the life that Nunes lived.

"Let me tell you about SSG Nunes. He was a wrestler in high school and married his high school sweetheart," CPT Todd Moe said of the 29-year-old Tennessee native. "He has been previously deployed to Haiti, Kosovo, Sinai and Bosnia," the A Co., TF 1-21 INF Commander went on to say.

"He had a wealth of experience that his Soldiers, peers and chain-of-command respected and relied upon."

Nunes' experience along with his motivation, positive attitude and desire to be better helped his squad become proficient in its duties, Moe said.

"His example was all that was needed for his Soldiers and peers to do the same," Moe said. "He trained his squad the right way, so they wouldn't need him in his absence to accomplish the mission. His squad remains trained and ready for the next challenge."

One of Nunes' team leaders mentioned how his training has paid off for the squad.

"Second Squad, 3rd platoon is a well-trained squad," SGT Mario Gordish said. "It was good enough that [its] Soldiers were able to function during the void of leadership. By our actions, [we] carried out the ideals of professionalism by which Staff Sergeant Nunes led his men."

Gordish also spoke of the two sides of Nunes - one who always desired to go beyond the standard and the other who was an easy going friend.

"I think he would like to be remembered as one who worked hard and played hard," Gordish said. "Professionally as a non-commissioned officer he not only enforced the standard, he sought to achieve the highest standard."

"In spirit he was a clown. He was about having fun and taking care of his guys," Gordish said. "While everyone in his squad would be posing for a picture trying hard to look like battle-hardened Gimlets, he would be the one to flash some bunny ears and smiling in the background."

Nunes leaves behind his wife, Christy, daughter, Larrisa, 7, son, Alex, 18 months, and his dream of one day returning to Tennessee and becoming a state trooper.

"I talked to his wife this week to help share in her grief and offer support," Moe said. "She asked that



From top right, clockwise: A photo of SSG Todd E. Nunes is on display during his memorial ceremony May 7.

SGT Terry Plummer, a team leader with A Co., TF 1-21 INF, renders a salute to SSG Nunes' memorial after the ceremony at Kirkuk air base.

A Soldier with A Co., TF 1-21 INF, bows his head during SSG Nunes' memorial ceremony.

SGT Mario Gordish, a team leader with A Co., TF 1-21 INF, makes remarks about his squad leader.

[Alpha Company Soldiers] write letters about her husband, so that her children can know their father. I told her that her children had just gained 120 new uncles."



'I challenge you to look for God's hand at work'

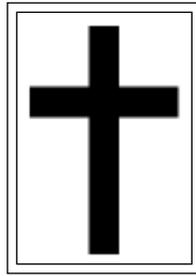
BY MAJ RANDY BRANDT
2ND BCT CHAPLAIN

While here in Iraq, I have been preaching through the book of 1 Samuel. One of the great stories of that book is found in chapter 7. It is the story of a nation that returns to God and turns away from useless idols.

The people of Israel move away from a lifestyle of serving other gods and they turn their hearts to worship the only True God. Because of their sincere repentance God honors their prayers and delivers them from the armies of the Philistines.

The Israelites win a great victory at the hand of the Lord and the Prophet Samuel is quick to lead the nation in giving God the credit for His miraculous intervention. Samuel takes a stone and sets it up in a strategic location near the battlefield and he names the stone "Ebenezer," saying, "Thus far has the Lord helped us."

An "Ebenezer" literally is a "stone of help", or a "stone of remembrance." A memorial stone, if you will. This stone is to be a reminder to the people of God of the help of God in their times of need.



Literally, as the days go by, the people of Israel can point back to that stone and tell the stories of how God provided for them and met their needs. They can tell their friends, their spouses, their children and their grandkids all about how God helped them.

Has the Lord been a help to you in these past few months? Has He intervened in your life to provide you help in your time of need? Why not set up an "Ebenezer," a stone of remembrance in order to help you remember the way that God has helped you.

I have an Ebenezer in my room at FOB Dagger. It is a picture of my wife, Julie, and my two daughters, Sarah and Rebecca. Every time I look at them I am reminded of how God has worked in my life to provide for me the best wife and the best kids in the world.

I have been blessed beyond measure, and I am reminded of that with every glance in their direction. God has faithfully cared for me and them and continues to do so every day while I am here and my family is in Germany.

I challenge you to look for God's hand at work in the midst of this deployment. I pray that you will quickly see His help in your times of need. When you find His help, don't forget to give Him the credit - an "Ebenezer" would be a great way to remember.

Chaplains take break from daily duties to attend conference

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT ROLAND G. WALTERS
196TH MPAD

Prior to landing in Northern Iraq four months ago, Task Force Danger chaplains vowed to nurture the living, care for the wounded and honor the dead each day of the yearlong deployment.

On April 29, they broke that vow, but for a good reason.

Brigade chaplains and chaplain assistants took a break from their daily duties to attend the first Unit Ministry Team Training conference at Forward Operating Base Danger. The day and a half meeting was hosted by 1st Infantry Division Chaplain LTC Mike Lembke. Nearly all of the task force's chaplains attended the event, he said.

The purpose of the conference, which will be held quarterly, was to evaluate the chaplains' services to the task force Soldiers thus far and look at new ways to meet the troops' needs.

"I realize that as chaplains, we need to be able to decompress, get out of the FOB and step away," said COL Bruce M. Fredrickson, 264th Engineer Group chaplain. "(The conference) was very renewing."

The division has a large area of responsibility, which makes it difficult to coordinate travel and schedule regular meetings, particularly because of the chaplains' many responsibilities. But hosting the conference quarterly will allow them to interact in person rather than by cyberspace and the telephone.

The meeting focused on professional development, and many of the chaplains' questions regarding how to handle certain information, situations and the like, were addressed in depth.

Additionally, the division clergymen gave updates on morale, counseling trends and worship programs on their respective FOBs. The reports enabled the brigade chaplains, also referred to as Major Subordinate Chaplains, to get an overall picture of how effective their

services are and whether or not to make adjustments.

"This conference helped identify some challenges we have and showed us things we need to continue doing," Fredrickson said, adding that it was productive, and the idea was an excellent one.

Lembke intentionally scheduled the conference about 45 days after the 1st ID officially took responsibility of Northern Iraq to give chaplains time to get acquainted with Soldiers and their needs, he said.

That transitional period was crucial, the chaplains said.

"We found that the high operation tempo is taking a greater toll on our Soldiers than we thought," Fredrickson said. "Within the three to four month time period, there has been a significant amount of cumula-

tive stress. These are attributed to the strain of being gone and the proximity of leaving, which is in the distant future.

He urged Soldiers not to "suffer in silence." Instead, they should get help immediately when problems arise.

Battle buddies and leaders also should carefully watch their troops and get them help if the leaders sense that something is wrong, he said.

"We have to let the Soldiers know that we have resources, like combat stress teams, to help them," he said.

Lembke added: "Soldiers are engaged in the mission, they understand what they do is very important. We support Soldiers by offering quality service and by being available for them."



MG John R.S. Batiste, 1st Infantry Division commander, took a moment to express his appreciation to chaplains and chaplain assistants during the Unit Ministry Team Training conference.

Back cover: Iraqi Civil Defense Corps members triumphantly carry SSG William Williams, Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, after conducting physical training with Coalition Forces on Kirkuk Airbase May 3. PT is part of the daily training regimen as U.S. Soldiers prepare ICDC troops to take over security duties. (Photo by SGT April Johnson)

In Memory of Task Force Danger and 1st Brigade Combat Team Soldiers killed while serving in Iraq

SSG Christopher E. Cutchall
D Troop, 1-4 Cavalry
September 29, 2003

2LT Todd J. Bryant
C Company, 1-34 Armor
October 31, 2003

SSG Gary L. Collins
A Company, 1-16 Infantry
November 8, 2003

SSG Mark D. Vasquez
A Company, 1-16 Infantry
November 8, 2003

SPC Joseph L. Lister
B Company, 1-34 Armor
November 20, 2003

SPC Thomas J. Sweet II
Service Battery, 1-5 Field Artillery
November 27, 2003

SPC Uday Singh
C Company, 1-34 Armor
December 1, 2003

SGT Ryan C. Young
A Company, 1-16 Infantry
December 2, 2003

SGT Jarrod W. Black
B Company, 1-34 Armor
December 12, 2004

SGT Dennis A. Corral
C Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
January 1, 2004

SFC Gregory B. Hicks
B Troop, 1-9 Cavalry
January 8, 2004

SPC William R. Sturges Jr.
B Troop, 1-9 Cavalry
January 24, 2004

SPC Jason K. Chappel
B Troop, 1-9 Cavalry
January 24, 2004

SGT Randy S. Rosenberg
B Troop, 1-9 Cavalry
January 24, 2004

CPT Matthew J. August
B Company, 1-9 Engineer Battalion
January 27, 2004

SFC James T. Hoffman
B Company, 1-9 Engineer Battalion
January 27, 2004

SGT Travis A. Moothart
B Company, 1-9 Engineer Battalion
January 27, 2004

SSG Sean G. Landrus
B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
January 29, 2004

PFC Nichole M. Frye
415th Civil Affairs Battalion
February 16, 2004

2LT Jeffrey C. Graham
C Company, 1-34 Armor
February 19, 2004

SPC Roger G. Ling
C Company, 1-34 Armor
February 19, 2004

SFC Richard S. Gottfried
HHC, Division Support Command
March 9, 2004

SSG Joe L. Dunigan Jr.
B Company, 1-16 Infantry
March 11, 2004

SPC Christopher K. Hill
B Company, 1-16 Infantry
March 11, 2004

CPT John F. Kurth
B Company, 1-18 Infantry
March 13, 2004

SPC Jason C. Ford
B Company, 1-18 Infantry
March 13, 2004

SPC Jocelyn L. Carrasquillo
HHC, 1-120 Infantry
March 13, 2004

SPC Tracy L. Laramore
B Company, 1-18 Infantry
March 17, 2004

SPC Clint R. Matthews
B Company, 1-18 Infantry
March 19, 2004

PV2 Ernest H. Sutphin
B Battery, 2-11 Field Artillery
March 19, 2004

PFC Jason C. Ludlam
HHC, 2-2 Infantry
March 19, 2004

PFC Dustin L. Kreider
B Company, 1-26 Infantry
March 21, 2004

SPC Adam D. Froehlich
C Battery, 1-6 Field Artillery
March 25, 2004

1LT Doyle M. Hufstедler
B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
March 31, 2004

SPC Sean R. Mitchell
B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
March 31, 2004

SPC Michael G. Karr Jr.
B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
March 31, 2004

PFC Cleston C. Raney
B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
March 31, 2004

PVT Brandon L. Davis
B Company, 1st Engineer Battalion
March 31, 2004

PFC John D. Amos II
C Company, 1-21 Infantry
April 4, 2004

SGT Lee D. Todacheene
HHC, 1-77 Armor
April 6, 2004

SFC Marvin L. Miller
C Troop, 1-4 Cavalry
April 7, 2004

SPC Isaac M. Nieves
A Company, 82nd Engineer Battalion
April 8, 2004

SSG Raymond E. Jones
C Company, 1-7 Field Artillery
April 9, 2004

SSG Toby W. Mallet
C Company, 1-7 Field Artillery
April 9, 2004

SPC Allen J. Vandayburg
C Company, 2-2 Infantry
April 9, 2004

SPC Peter G. Enos
HHB, 1-7 Field Artillery
April 9, 2004

SGT William C. Eckhart
F Troop, 4th Cavalry
April 10, 2004

PV2 Nathan P. Brown
C Company, 2-108 Infantry
April 11, 2004

SSG Victor A. Rosaleslomeli
A Company, 2-2 Infantry
April 13, 2004

SGT Christopher Ramirez
B Company, 1-16 Infantry
April 14, 2004

SPC Richard K. Trevithick
C Company, 9th Engineer Battalion
April 14, 2004

SGT Brian M. Wood
A Company, 9th Engineer Battalion
April 16, 2004

SPC Marvin A. Camposiles
HHC, 1-26 Infantry
April 17, 2004

PFC Shawn C. Edwards
B Company, 121st Signal Battalion
April 23, 2004

SPC Martin W. Kondor
A Company, 1-63 Armor
April 29, 2004

SGT Joshua S. Ladd
367th Maintenance Company
April 30, 2004

SPC Trevor A. Win'e
24th Quartermaster Company
May 1, 2004

CPT John E. Tipton
HHC, 1-16 Infantry
May 2, 2004

SSG Todd E. Nunes
A Company, 1-21 Infantry
May 2, 2004

CPT Christopher J. Kenny
F Troop, 4th Cavalry
May 3, 2004

SSG Marvin R. Sprayberry III
F Troop, 4th Cavalry
May 3, 2004

SGT Gregory L. Wahl
F Troop, 4th Cavalry
May 3, 2004

PFC Lyndon A. Marcus
F Troop, 4th Cavalry
May 3, 2004

SPC James J. Holmes
C Company, 141st Engineer Battalion
May 8, 2004

SPC Phillip D. Brown
B Company, 141st Engineer Battalion
May 8, 2004

SPC Marcos O. Nolasco
B Company, 1-33 Field Artillery
May 18, 2004

SSG Joseph P. Garyantes
B Company, 1-63 Armor
May 18, 2004

SPC Michael C. Campbell
Headquarters Troop, 1-4 Cavalry
May 19, 2004

SPC Owen D. Witt
B Company, 1-4 Cavalry
May 23, 2004

PFC Markus J. Johnson
D Battery, 4-3 Air Defense Artillery
June 1, 2004

CPT Humayun S. Khan
HHC, 201st Forward Support Battalion
June 8, 2004

